



GREATER AKRON

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Witt's End

Once is Not Enough

In February, Susan and I braved the sunshine and warm temperatures of southern California to bird a new spot. Someone had to go; we decided to make the sacrifice. Called the Carrizo Plain and in part protected by the Nature Conservancy, it's been described as America's Serengeti. That's a stretch. The Wilds in central Ohio is more like the Serengeti.

Carrizo is, however, magical; like nowhere else. We were



dazzled by a cloud of mountain bluebirds too many to count. Literally hundreds. We stopped the car in the middle of the road and let the birds descend around us. The huge mixed flock contained American pipits, lark sparrows and house finches in red and orange variations. Color dripped

from the few fence posts and strands of rusting barbed wire that recorded a time gone by when cattle roamed this place. Burrowing owls popped up next to the road as we drove by. The soda lake within this 50-mile-long birding Mecca was lined with hundreds of American avocets.

A major draw at Carrizo Plains for us -- and many other birders though we saw few of them -- was the California condor. By late afternoon we had about given up hope of seeing this 20-pound bird with its 9.5-foot wingspan. As dusk descended we opted to drive over to a spot where the San Andreas Fault is visible. Fortunately, Susan was driving -- always safest when we're birding. I was debating rolling up the window or letting the warm air continue to blow through my hair when a huge black shape came up from the ground a couple hundred yards to our right. With the calm of a person spotting an American Bison crossing the road, I screamed, stop! As an experienced birder/driver, Susan knows that means now -- not why.

It's still unclear if the car had actually stopped rolling as

we scampered up a nearby hill, our binoculars focused on the telltale white patches under the bird's wings, finger-like primaries on the ends of extended flat wings, unmistakable huge yellow beak and the brilliant white patch of upper tail coverts. Whoa, there!

We looked at each other, our brains processing the data we had and suspected. We realized we had a juvenile golden eagle. Our hearts restarted their normal pumping functions. Hey, a good bird is what it is. And we now have another reason to go back.

-Clyde Witt

Programs for Spring

The chapter holds meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month, except for December when we do the Christmas Count. June is our annual picnic so the meeting place is not always the same. There are no meetings in July and August. Meetings are held at the Mingo Shelter in Sand Run MetroPark in the Merriman Valley. The entrance is off Sand Run Parkway, east of the ford and east of the Shady Hollow Pavilion (our previous meeting site.) Check MetroParks Maps at www.summitmetroparks.org for a map of Sand Run Park. The doors open at 6:30 and the meeting starts at 7:00. We usually start with a short business session before the main program. Meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to bring a friend. Plan to stay after the meeting to enjoy refreshments served by our stellar hospitality committee.

Nothing like a couple of days of spring weather to make one haul out the field guides in another desperate attempt to learn those warblers and sparrows -- again. Why not start with something a bit larger and easier to identify?



At the April meeting we'll have Damon M. Greer, assistant wildlife management supervisor, Human Wildlife Conflict and Urban Wildlife Sec-

tion, ODNR Division of Wildlife, talking about black bears. Black Bears in Ohio, Something's a Bruin.

This presentation will cover the history, biology and ecology of black bears in Ohio. It will also cover the Division of Wildlife's efforts to track or monitor the activities of black bears as they re-colonize Ohio. The program will include information on how to live with and avoid conflicts with black bears as they become more numerous across the state.

May

Dr. Dan Petit, chief of natural resources, passerine expert and research leader for the Cleveland MetroParks, and all-round birding expert. will discuss new research and findings on birds of this area. We'll also talk about this year's warbler migration. This is a great opportunity to talk with one of the nation's leading bird researchers who also happens to be a resident of Summit County.

June

The chapter's annual picnic will be held June 27. Place, time, speaker and a few other details are yet to be decided. Stay tuned.

Lake Erie Wing Watch

The popular program, Lake Erie Wing Watch, will be the weekend of April 7-9. This is the 14th annual LEWW weekend. It will kick off Friday at the Cedar Point Center at Firelands College, with a "Taste of Erie County". Area restaurants will be on hand with their specialties. A silent auction will be held during the reception. Kenn Kaufmann, keynote speaker, will present "Patterns of Bird Migration in North America."

Saturday begins with Breakfast With The Birds at Old Woman's Creek. All day Saturday there are concurrent sessions to choose from and an exhibitor hall to explore. Sunday, field trips in Erie, Lorain and Ottawa counties will be offered. For more info, or to pre-register, visit www.LakeErieWingWatch.com, or call Mary L. Warren, ODNR-Division of Wildlife naturalist, (419) 898-0960 ext. 31.

Ivory-billed What!

Thanks to Kathy Mock for this notice about the Explorer Series at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History: "Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker" Tim Gallagher, birder and author will speak Friday, April 21, 7:30 pm at the William and Nancy Klamm Memorial Lecture, Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Though the Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been considered extinct for six decades, Gallagher, editor-in-chief, Living Bird magazine, passionately believed

the bird existed. He traveled the south following reports of the "ghost bird," exploring swamps on foot or by canoe when the leads seemed credible. His tenacity paid off when he and a colleague positively identified the bird in an Arkansas swamp, leading to the announcement on April 28, 2005, that the species had been rediscovered.

Tickets for Explorer Series lectures are \$7 for members (\$6 for seniors, students and children) and \$9 for nonmembers (\$8 for seniors, students and children). For tickets, call (800) 317-9155, ext. 3279, or (216) 231-1177.

Something Fishy About ESA

If you think it's only birders that are upset by recent tinkering with the Endangered Species Act, here's something I picked up from the Trout Unlimited's Web site. TU, Ducks Unlimited and other organizations all have a stake in preserving our natural resources, regardless of the end-use of that resource. Here, in part, is its editorial: "Many salmon species the Pacific Northwest are protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA provides protection for twenty-six stocks of salmon and steelhead and the nearly 150,000 square miles of habitat they depend on to survive. Looking at housing prices and the building boom in places like Portland and Seattle, it hasn't stopped development. That's as it should be; the ESA is not a law that can or should be used to stop all development. However, the ESA can help to give salmon some space to survive and recover. They need a little more riparian protection in logging operations, more caution in the use of pesticides near streams, more thought in designing housing projects. And they need the attention that the ESA provides to encourage people to care about these remarkable fish.

That's why TU was disappointed when we learned that the federal government decided not to include Oregon Coast coho salmon on its list of protected species. It's not as if TU believes that being on the list of protected species is a good thing. We all look forward to the day when salmon stocks can come off of the ESA list - but only when they have truly been recovered. Unfortunately, that was not the case for Oregon's coastal coho.

What is most disturbing about the decision is that the federal agency making the decision, NOAA Fisheries, relied more on political science than fish science. The agency's own scientists thought the coho should be protected.

TU is leading the effort to make sure that salmon stocks that need the protection of the ESA remain protected. We will fight to reverse the decision on Oregon's coho.

We also know the ESA is only part of the answer - the commitment of TU volunteers in restoring habitat is also critical."



Earth Day: Coming to a Planet Near You

I can hardly wait for my grandkids to say, “Grandpa, tell us about the dawn of history and all that Earth Day hoopla . . .” Hard to believe the first Earth Day was 36 years ago, March 21, 1970 in Washington, D.C. The estimated head count was 20 million. There were a lot of heads in those days. Those of us attending the Environmental Teach In, as it was called, had no idea where the world was going. Far out, man.



The idea for Earth Day evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962. President Kennedy gave visibility to the issue of the environment on a five-day, eleven-state conservation tour in September 1963. For many reasons the tour did not succeed in putting the issue onto the national political agenda. However, it was the germ of the idea that ultimately flowered into Earth Day. □ Senator Gaylord Nelson pushed hard and focused everyone’s attention on environmental awareness. Earth Day is Saturday, April 22.

There will be of celebrations and hoopla this year, too. Here’s one of interest that probably won’t make the papers. It’s called the Green Faire, and will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron, 3300 Morewood Road, Fairlawn (near Summit Mall) on Sunday, April 30 from 11:30 - 3:00pm. It’s open to the public.

This event has a strong educational flavor. It’s an opportunity to learn more about the interdependent web of all existence while having fun. Games and crafts for children will be sponsored by the Summit County Solid Waste Management Authority and the Soil and Water Conservation District (take home gifts too). Healthy lunches, “No Sweat(shops)” clothing and more will be available for sale.

Exhibits will include a hybrid car and live animals, as well as information about socially responsible investments, organic horticulture, local library resources and area environmental groups and parks. A Speakers’ Room will provide short presentations on various topics, such as “Greening Your Home”, with lots of time for questions. “Mixed Up Strings” will make music.

Spring Bird Walks

Once again, the chapter is cooperating with the MetroParks, Serving Summit County, in bringing to the area some challenging bird walks. Field Trip Coordinator Marc Nolls has put together a great lineup. He is also looking for some leaders for these trips. If your birding skills are a bit above knowing the difference between an American Robin and fried chicken, you qualify as a leader. See Marc at the meetings to volunteer.

Here’s the agenda:

- April 22, 8 a.m. Firestone Metro Park. Meet at the parking area on Tuscarawas.
- April 29, 8 a.m. The Chuckery in Cascade Valley Park.
- May 6, 8 a.m. Deep Lock Quarry, the Towpath Trail in the CVNP.
- May 13, 8 a.m. Liberty Park’s Buttonbush Trail.

Three of these are new for many folks so check MetroPark’s Web site, www.summitmetroparks.org, or come to the meeting and we’ll tell you where to go.

Erie, One Great Lake

The story of Lake Erie’s comeback is well known, as are the occasional efforts by those outside the state to come up with a scheme to pipe its water to some far-off destination. We laugh at these plans, however the fact of the matter is, until just recently there has been no comprehensive program to protect the water of the Great Lakes.

All the Great Lakes governors are working to create the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. Essentially the



plan limits the withdrawal and diversion of water from the Great Lakes. There are many groups involved in this effort, including Audubon Ohio. It is encouraging us to contact our local officials in Washington to express our concerns about the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. You can find all the names and addresses of elected officials on the back of this newsletter.

Here some great facts about the Great Lakes:

- They encompass 95% of America’s fresh water;
- They provide drinking water for 40 million people;
- The contain at least 162 aquatic invasive species;
- Lake Erie is the largest sports fishery of the five;
- Lake Erie provides habitat for 350 species of birds;
- Ohio shares 312 miles of coastline along Lake Erie.